

one whose boundary with the Outer Hills is so well defined as is the case on the east.

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As so much time has been spent over the eastern tract, I will now do little more than point out where on the west similar spaces occur.

Just west of the Chināb, behind Pauni, a ridge, which corresponds to the one we traced as far as that river from the east, rises suddenly and towers above the Outer Hills which lie to the south of it. This is called Dragari Thār, being sacred to a devta¹ whose name is Dragar. The south face of it is a great escarpment; it has a line of precipitous limestone cliffs, of which the part vertical is about 1000 feet, and far down beneath that a talus-slope continues; the ridge is narrow and the ground inclines quickly, but not precipitously, down to the north.

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Looking in that direction from the summit, we get a general view of this mountain-tract which shows it to have the same characters as that around Rāmban and Bhadarwāh. We see a number of ridges, some parallel for a short distance, some branching, spreading out in innumerable spurs in every direction. The lower parts are dotted with chil-trees and with patches, or, as they appear in the distance, specks of cultivated ground. The higher ridges bear thick forest of the other pine. These mountains are in the tract called Budil, which is drained by the Ans River. I have never been over it, but, from accounts, believe it to be very similar to what was described behind Rāmban, and to have for inhabitants the same Pahārī race. Beyond appears the snowy Panjāl, the southern boundary of Kashmir, which at this part is a complete ridge, nowhere broken by a gap, only jagged by rocky peaks standing up out of the snowy mass. In the beginning of May, when I saw the range from this spot, snow was covering a great vertical height of the mountains, but by August or September all melts away, except a few beds that have collected to a thickness by snow-slips.

The neighbourhood around Dragari Thār produces iron, which is smelted by the caste called Dhiyār. These men, at the starting of a new furnace or the beginning of any other important business, go to a spot on the ridge where there is an altar raised

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of hills, such as we have all along called the "Middle Mountains"; at Thanna we have reached to the foot of the slope of the Ratan Ridge itself. 133^y
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In the march from Thanna to Baramgalla we go over the Ratan Pir.* It is a good steep pull to reach the summit, which is 8200 feet above the sea; there is hardly any depression in the ridge at that spot. On some of the slopes the mountain is thickly covered with forest, a forest of much variety and beauty. Box grows here largely; it is cut and sent to the towns, where it is mostly used for making combs. On the higher parts of the ridge one meets with numbers of the great black and grey monkey, called *langūr*. [136]
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From the Ratan Pir one looks north and north-eastward on to the Panjāl Range, and obtains grand views of its mountains. The descent also gives beautiful prospects, both of near forest views and of the more distant hills. The road is rough and difficult; one's pony, that was useful for the ascent, had best be allowed to go down the hill without a rider.

Baramgalla, which is the halting-place, is in the valley of the stream that rises near the Pir Panjāl, and with many others goes to form the Pūnch River. It is shut in closely by spurs of the hills.

The next march, from Baramgalla to Poshiana, is along the bottom of the narrow valley, among the large rounded stones of

* In these hills the word *Pir* has come to be used more or less generally for *Pass*. The history of its acquirement of this meaning I conceive to be this. *Pir* in Persian means first, *old*, or *an old man*, and thence a saint or *faqir*. It is common for *faqirs* to establish themselves on *Passes* for the sake of contemplating the works of God and of receiving the alms of travellers; when any noted holy *faqir* died on a *Pass*, the place became sacred to his memory, and was often called after him, his title of *Pir* being prefixed; at last it became so common for every important *Pass* to have a name beginning with *Pir* that the word acquired the secondary meaning of *Mountain Pass*. 792
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Ratan Pir must be called so after one Ratan, which is a man's name among the Hindūs. As to Pir Panjāl, the latter of the two words is applied to a great mountain ridge, at all events to the one we are coming to, I am not sure whether it is a general word for a range in any language. Pir Panjāl now means simply the *Pass* of the Great Range. There was, however, at one time a *faqir* who lived on it and bore the title of Pir. Bernier, who crossed in Aurangzeb's time, says there was a hermit on the *Pass* who had resided there ever since Jehāngir. Bernier wrote this in 1665. Jehāngir reigned from 1605 to 1628; by this the hermit would have dwelt there thirty-seven years at least. I imagine it was from him that the *Pass* acquired the first word of its present name.

valley, and the steep mountains rise on either side, the northern slopes covered with pine forest, the southern bare and treeless. At Gagangir the track climbs along the river torrent to Sonāmarg (8,650 feet), the last and highest village in the Sind valley, if we except the small hamlet of Nilagrar some 2 miles higher up. Sonāmarg is a beautiful mountain meadow surrounded by glaciers and forests. It is a miserable place in the winter time, but it is of great importance to encourage a resident population. The chief staples of cultivation are *grain*, or Tibetan barley, and buckwheat. It is good to turn loose the baggage ponies to graze on the meadow grasses; for in a few more marches one passes into a region like the country beyond the Burzil on the road to Gilgit, a land devoid of forests and pastures, 'a desert of bare crags and granite dust, a cloudless region always burning or freezing under the clear blue sky.' The Zoji La (11,300 feet) is the lowest depression in the great Western Himālayas which run from the Indus valley on the Chilās frontier. Over this high range the rains from the south hardly penetrate, and the cultivation, scanty and difficult, depends entirely on artificial canals. The ascent to the Zoji La from Kashmir is very steep, the descent to the elevated table-land of Tibet almost imperceptible. For five marches the route follows the course of the Drās river, through a desolate country of piled up rocks and loose gravel. At Chanagund the road to Skardu crosses the Drās river by a cantilever bridge, 4 miles above the junction of the Drās and Suru rivers, and about 8 miles farther on the Indus receives their waters. But the steep cliffs of the Indus offer no path to the traveller, and the track leaves the Drās river, and turns in a southerly direction to Kargil, a delightful oasis. Then the road abandons the valleys and ascends the bare mountains. The dreary scenery is compensated by the cloudless pale blue sky and the dry bracing air so characteristic of Ladākh. Through gorges and defiles the valley of Shergol is reached, the first Buddhist village on the road. Thenceforward the country is Buddhist, and the road runs up and down over the Namika La (13,000 feet) and over the Fotu La (13,400 feet), the highest point on the Leh road. Along the road near the villages are Buddhist monasteries, *manis* (walls of praying stones) and *chortens*, where the ashes of the dead mixed with clay and moulded into a little idol are placed, and at Lamayaru there is a wilderness of monuments. Later, the Indus is crossed by a long cantilever bridge; and the road runs along the right

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